

Your Staff Can Make or Break You

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As practitioners, we devote countless hours to thinking of ways to make our offices run more smoothly. We focus on scheduling patients, stocking supplies and arranging our treatment rooms in a manner that is consistent with improved efficiency. All of these are important ideas to consider in time management, but the key to making your day run wrinkle-free is your staff. Investing in your office staff is the most effective way to maximize office efficiency.

Open communication between yourself and your assistants is vital to the health of your practice. Keep your door open at all times for any question, concerns or ideas that your staff members may have. Begin the day by saying “hello” to each staff member. Smile when you address them, and ask if you can provide anything that might help them better perform their duties that day. Compliment your staff in front of patients, and tell patients, in the presence of your assistants, what a great help they are to you.

Before you leave the office, speak to each of your assistants individually. Ask them about their day, and if there is anything that you can do to make the next one even better. Talk to them about any sticky situations they might have come across. In telling them how you would like certain situations handled, they will be better prepared for future encounters of a similar nature. Ask them for ideas on how to run the office more smoothly. You may learn that something as simple as moving the copy machine closer to the front desk makes a difference in your assistant’s day.

It is also a good idea to send your key staff members to an educational seminar. Choose a workshop that you feel is pertinent to their duties, and ask them to bring back at least two new workable ideas for the betterment of the office. The knowledge gained from such an experience is not only beneficial to your productivity, but the trip might be considered as an incentive for your assistants.

Offering incentives for your staff members is a great way to create an office that is goal oriented. Instant cash bonuses or gifts should be considered for handling an exceptional workload, making a given number of orthotics, or seeing a certain amount of new patients in a day. In working towards achieving these incentive-based goals, your staff will be recruiting new patients and promoting the services that you provide.

You must thank your staff for their part in actively helping to build your practice. The thanks that you give may be monetary, or it may be in the form of a day off, a vacation, a luncheon, a dinner or even movie tickets. However you choose to show your appreciation, make certain that it is done in a positive, sincere fashion. Good behavior that is rewarded is likely to be repeated.

Though some of these ideas may seem costly, you must weigh them against the cost of continually hiring and re-training assistants. When viewed in this light, it costs very little to provide your staff with an occasional lunch to thank them for their contribution while reminding them of their importance to your practice. And it costs nothing to personally thank each staff member at the end of the day, or to talk to them about their concerns or ideas. Implementing some of their ideas may even make money for you – so don’t forget to share some of the extra profit with those that helped increase your earnings!